A BRUTAL FATHER

"Dollars ain't everything, marm," said Mr. Elijah L. Poggson. "I've made my pile, and it ain't perhaps a small one. But there's nothing but trouble ahead. There's my daughter; she's a fine girl. It's her clear duty to me and her country to marry a British lord. There's Lord Telfer and Lord Bulper and the Earl of Hurley to select from. They'll all jump. But she says she'd ruther have no truck with lords. She don't vally them a cent. She'd ruther marry a man she really loves and live in a cottage. Did you ever hear such gall? It makes me downright sick. What's the good of my slavin' all my life and going down-town every day if my daughter's going to keep house in a cottage?"

"It is only an expression, you see," said Lady William Nowell, with a compassionate smile. "It does great credit to your daughter's heart, but I expect the cottage she contemplates would be one standing in extensive grounds and with all the latest improvements, including the electric light."

"A cottage at Newport, maybe," said Mr. Poggson. "And a lord. But she says she hain't no use for lords. And then there's more gall. My secretary—he was real cute, down to every trick in the game on the other side. This side he seems to have developed into a puffect fool. This old country is too local for him. He don't understand. The all-fired fool got a letter asking me to subscribe to a local institootion, signed 'Bletchingdon & Denton,' and he mailed back a refusal, beginning it 'Dear Sirs' and addressing it 'Messrs. Bletchingdon & Denton'—and it was from the dook himself all the time."

"Why don't you have an English secretary to manage your English correspondence?" said Lady William, with animation. "One who would know the ropes exactly—steer you clear of all these—er—contretemps—and help you in many ways?"

"Local man to run the local business?"

"Exactly. Now, it happens that by a curious coincidence I happen to know of just the kind of young man who would suit you exactly"—rude people said that Lady William by a curious coincidence always did happen to know of the very thing that people wanted, and that this knowledge was of value to her. "He is not too young, thoroughly up to date, of very good family, and very good looking."

"Sounds a bit dangerous. I reckon Marry Antinette is just the sorter girl to fall dead in love with him, specially if he hadn't a cent."

"But, surely, Mr. Poggson, you could then exercise your parental authority?"

"Certny, I could exercise it; but I ain't certn that drivin' is the safest way of keepin' girls on the straight, and I wouldn't bet much that Marry Antinette mightn't bolt in the opposite direction."

"I can assure you, my dear Mr. Poggson, you need have no cause for alarm. When I have told you all about the young man you will see how exactly suited he would be, and that you need have no anxiety whatever. It is quite providential that you told me just now——"

This was how it was that Mr. Charles Newton became private secretary to Mr. Poggson, the American millionaire, for the English department, so to speak. He was engaged at by no means an excessive salary, but, on the other hand, he was to board and lodge with his employer.

Mr. Poggson chuckled over this to his daughter, the romantic Marie Antoinette.

"It don't cost me a cent more to put him in one of the guest rooms that ain't used and to let him eat what the servants would waste. And it saves me a clear hundred a year. Besides, I have him always at hand."

Marie Antoinette was one of those remarkably brilliant blondes whom America seems to have the monopoly of producing. She owed her designation to her dead mother's devotion to the memory of the unfortunate queen of Louis XIV. Never was there a more glaring contrast than between the name and its owner. The American beauty's most striking features were a pair of big, China-blue eyes, and a retrousse nose with a scornful tilt that was all-impertinent and not in the least suggestive of imperial dignity or queenly hauteur. She had a great deal of fluffy, fair hair, which was more reminiscent of the hairdressers' advertisements than the coiffure of the martyred Queen. The one thing that could be said to be in common between Miss Poggson and her namesake was the inclination for romance which proved so disastrous to the reputation of the Austrian lady, and was so strongly disliked by the father of the American belle.

Miss Poggson's nose acquired an extra scornful tilt when her parent informed her of his arrangement with Mr. Newton. She dubbed him "the hired man" forthwith.

"Lady Nowell says he is of thorrowly good family," observed her father.

"Oh, yes; that's your style, pop. Lords and good family. I've no use for lords, and these old Britishers with pedigrees as long as Fifth Avenue and about a dime to their names make me tired."

"I reckon you won't see enough of him to make you tired. I ain't hired him to beau you around town, but to write my letters, and see that the next duke that applies here ain't sent away snortin'."

"Beau me round the town!" said Miss Poggson, with deep disdain. "A hired man."

'Sides, he ain't that style at all," continued Mr. Poggson. "No use for women. Not taking any. Had a good time and wants to square. When you come on he'll skedaddle, you bet."

There was something so unusual, not to say unnatural, about such a view of life in Marie Antoinette's opinion that she became possessed with a violent desire to inspect the strange being who held such horrible sentiments. This did not prevent her firing a parting shot at her father.

She saw the secretary for the first time from the stairs, and was surprised. Really for a hired man and the author of such reprehensible notions he was rather attractive in appearance. If he had not given his name in the perfectly audible voice which is one of the characteristics of the day, she might have thought it was some fresh one or other of the gilded youth come "on the hunt," with herself as quarry.

She made his acquaintance at lunch and dinner, and found him agreeable. She soon perceived that the feeling was reciprocated. This at first amused her. Then she presumed on it to interrupt him at his work. She found that there were quite a number of things which she wanted to know, and when the thirst for knowledge came on her she marched ruthlessly into the secretary's room, sat down, with an apology, in front of him, and encouraged him to converse with her.

Mr. Poggson, catching her in the act, objected strongly.

"I don't pay my secretary to gas to you, but to write my letters," he said, with parental frankness.

"You pay him so much!" retorted Miss Poggson, with scorn.

"I pay him what he asks," replied her father firmly. "If he's worth three times that salary to me, so much the better for me. But don't you come blandishing around disturbing him. There's Lord Buler and the Earl of Hurley dyin' to pop if you didn't choke them off with both hands. It's your business to go and blandish to them."

"Which?"

"I would prefer the earl myself. It's more toney. But if you're more stuck on the lord I give you a free hand."

"Thank you for nothing," replied Marie Antoinette, disdainfully. "I wouldn't take them if they were sold at a dime a dozen. I'm told that Hurley's generally known as 'Early-Purly' because he drinks, and Bulper's known as the 'Bull-pup' because he's so hideous."

"Well, you might cure Hurley, or you needn't look at the 'Bul-pup'—he is blamed ugly; but as you've got to marry one or the other——"

"I'm an American girl," said Miss Poggson, with decision.

"I'm an American father," replied Mr. Poggson, darkly, though he could have scarcely explained his meaning.

The result of this passage of arms was that Marie Antoinette, in defiance of her father, persisted in making inroads on the secretary's time, and showing a very agreeable side of her character to him, while she proffered nothing but thorns to the noble suitors whom Mr. Poggson favored.

The millionaire stormed in vain about this disobedience.

Matters came to a climax at the ball which Mr. and Miss Poggson gave to the elite of London society, with the kind assistance of Lady William Nowell. By the bye, it was whispered that Lady William's kindness made a difference in her banking account to the extent of four figures.

Now, Lord Hurley, otherwise "Early-Purly," was really very much in love with Marie Antoinette Poggson, and at the same time in awe of her. He wanted to marry her, but whenever he approached the subject she contrived to chill him to the marrow, so that he was quite unable to proceed. Yet he received the most warm encouragement from her father, who made no secret of his wishes. The result of the various spurs to action was that Hurley determined that come what might, he would propose at the Poggson ball.

Unluckily for him, when the night came his tremors arrived also, and he adopted the injudicious plan of keeping his courage up by trying to fix it with repeated "pegs." The result naturally was that he became a trifle more lively than was altogether well.

Marie Antoinette did not discover that there was anything amiss until she danced with him. Then she thought his steering bad even for a smart young peer. Lastly, the exaggerated tone of his conversation showed her what was wrong. She was so disgusted at the discovery that she shook him off at once, and, leaving him there, seized the arm of Mr. Newton who was standing near.

"Take me away," she said; "that wretch is tipsy."

The hired man quickly danced her round the room, and they disappeared into the sitting-out places.

Now the whole of this had been witnessed by Mr. Poggson. He did not refer to it that evening, but in the morning he gave Marie Antoinette a solid lecture on her misconduct. She had insulted a peer of the realm; she had made a show of herself with a mere common secretary.

"He's not a common secretary!" cried Marie Antoinette angrily. "He is of just as good family and a far better man than that wretch Hurley; and he is a gentleman, too, which Hurley will never be."

"One would think you were in love with him, to hear you talk!" cried her father with rough decision.

"Well, then, perhaps I am in love with him," retorted his daughter, with flashing eyes and flaming cheeks.

"Oh, this must be stopped at once," said Mr. Poggson with determination; and he rang the bell which communicated with the secretary's room.

"What are you going to do?" cried his daughter in alarm.

"Wait, and you'll see," he replied grimly.

When Mr. Newton arrived his employer attacked him at once, charged him with having misused his position of trust to entrap the affections of his employer's daughter.

The secretary replied in a manly and straightforward manner. He denied the charge entirely. As for his own feelings, they were purely private. He was not insensible to the attractions of Miss Poggson—no one could be. If this was an offence, it was an irremediable one.

"You hear, Marry Antinette?" said Mr. Poggson, with a huge laugh. "My hired man actually has the assurance to say that he is in love with you. Now, then, my girl, show your spirit; stamp on him."

"No, no; you are quite wrong; wrong all the time!" cried Marie Antoinette, in a pained, low voice, putting out her hands as if in search.

The next minute, somehow, she was in Mr. Newton's arms.

* * * * * * * *

"I don't think," said Mr. Poggson to Lady William Nowell, on the day when Mr. Newton and Miss Poggson were married, "that Marry Antinette has quite got over my brutality. She hasn't an idea that you had told me that only two old men of eighty or thereabouts stood between him and the earldom of Finchley, and she don't guess that we may have reckoned that the best way to induce a girl to bolt in a certain direction is to drive her hard all in the opposite. But she'll come round in time. I hope, marm, we are all as pleased as I am."

"These diamonds certainly are lovely," said Lady William, without apparent relevance, as she contemplated a very handsome bracelet on her wrist.—London World.

CANNOT BE ERADICATED.

Castes and Customs of India Will Last Forever.

(From the London Express.)

Forty-three years ago, upon the 10th of the present month, the great Indian military centre of Meerut saw the kindling of that terrible blaze which was destined to ravage the whole of British Hindoostan.

Nowadays every schoolboy knows that the Indian mutiny was directly the outcome of a religious misunderstanding. In 1857 the British soldier could not understand why the smearing of a little grease upon his cartridges should offend the Sepoy. But the grease used was that of animals which were unclean alike to Hindoos and Mohammedans. Thus it came to pass that this same misunderstanding resulted in the shedding of oceans of innocent blood and the near loss of an empire of 250,000,000 souls.

Today Tommy and his officers know better than to offend native susceptibilities. Nevertheless, there is much in Hindoostan that the average European finds it hard to understand.

One of the greatest stumbling blocks is that of caste. There are now four principal Hindoo castes; Brahmin, or priest; Kshatriya, or soldier; Vaisya, or industrial, and the much despised Sudra, servile caste. These four divisions are subdivided again and again into many others. For instance, every village has its dhobi, or washerman; kumbar, or potter; mali, or green grocer; sunri, or publican; chamas, or cobbler; kahar, or palkie bearer, and a dozen other rigorously exclusive sects. The boasted blue blood of our European nobility pales into insignificance by comparison. Here in England, for instance, every ambitious boy, however humbly born, may aspire to just such a position as his talents may fit him for. In India it is different. Not only does the son never aspire to rise above the father's station in life, but, in addition, he could not, if he chose.

Consequently the brassworking father of a dozen sons will bring them up as brassworkers; the potter father, as potters, and so on, ad infinitum. Nor must the lower caste man in any way violate the sancity of his higher-class brother, for the penalties as to the purification of the latter are many and inconvenient. Similarly, he must marry within his own caste, he may only eat with his own caste, and, if a Sudra, he will esteem it an honor if he is allowed to imbibe the water in which his superior Brahmin has laved his feet.

But what undoubtedly strikes the Britisher with greatest force is the fatalistic way in which the lower-class man resigns himself without a word of grumbling to this treatment. He is saturated with caste. He is overwhelmed with a distorted sense of its magnitude. And before its imposing juggernaut he is merely an abject piece of limp, kickless humanity.

Another curious custom is that of "ruksut hai" (you may go). In England it is etiquette for an afternoon caller to himself take the initiative in the matter of his departure. Indeed, it would be considered the height of ill breeding if the hostess gave the slightest indication of any desire to be relieved of her caller's presence. In India the custom is reversed and the native will never leave the white man's presence until told he may go. The shoe and turban question is a constant source of discord. As any schoolboy knows, the Hindoo keeps on his turban and discards his shoes on entering a house. Not to do so is the height of disrespect. When Lord Lawrence occupied the viceregal chair he was compelled to issue an official mandate upholding the custom. Similarly your native servant would as soon think of appearing before you minus his cummerbund as your English footman would wait at table in his shirt sleeves.

The vice versa customs of the man in the street are legion. The native clerk sits upon the floor to write and his characters run from right to left. The plowman uses a miserable little plow which is utterly unfit for its work by reason of its shortness—said shortness being due to the fact that the plowman will only drive his team by twisting their tails and cannot therefore be far behind them. The tailor, like his English brother, squats to his work, but with the important distinction that he uses his toes to hold the work while his fingers are busied with the sewing.

The interior of the native houses is equally opposed to European notions of comfort. They are devoid of all furniture, unless one can dignify a few rugs, cushions, and curtains by such a name. Even the wealthiest bankers and merchants do without crockery, glass, tables, and even plates, knives and forks, while you might search the entire wardrobe of their large corps of retainers without coming across a single hook, eye or button.

Native relaxations are not particularly elevating. The gambling element is provided for by the showers which occasionally visit even this parched land. The usual practice is to bet upon the probability of some particular rain tank overflowing by a certain hour of the day. The drink habit is responsible for much crime.

A NOBLE TREASURE HOUSE.

Opening to the World of a Grand Art Collection.

(From the London Telegraph.)

Hertford house, the red brick mansion which forms the north side of Manchester Square, is now a temple of art, which will be one of the chief glories of London, and the envy of the whole world. It is the home of the far-famed Wallace collection of art treasures, which probably has never been rivaled in history as a private collection. The Golden house of Nero, enriched with the spoils of ancient Greece, and the Indian treasures of the Palace of Delhi may possibly have represented a more fabulous sum than the collection which was bequeathed to the British nation by Lady Wallace a little more than six years ago, yet certainly no private collector in any land or any age ever owned so many priceless jewels as did the lady who made this more than princely gift to the country. The Wallace collection was formed in the main by Francis Charles, third Marquis, and Richard, fourth Marquis of Hertford, two English noblemen of inexhaustible fortune and of exquisite taste in all matters relating to art. The fourth marquis, who spent most of his life in Paris, and was the close friend of Louis Napoleon, bequeathed his treasures to the late Sir Richard Wallace, who left them, considerably enriched by the additions he himself had made, to his widow, and she, with noble generosity, made them over to the nation.

In conformity with the terms of the bequest, the Government agreed to give a site in the central part of London, and build thereon a special museum, it being expressly provided that the collection should be kept intact, and bear the name of the generous testatrix. It was generally felt that the home of the Seymours and Wallaces, in itself full of historic associations, should, if possible, be chosen as the permanent home of the collection; and an act of Parliament authorized the expenditure, and the house is now the property of the nation.

The following trustees were appointed by the treasury July 28, 1897—in addition to Sir John Murray Scott, baronet, who was specially nominated under the will—to take over the Wallace collection: The Earl of Rosebery, Sir Edward Malet, Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Alfred C. de Rothschild. Mr. Claude Phillips was appointed keeper. Hertford house will be visited and admired as the ideal "House Beautiful." Standing as it does on the site of the earlier mansion where lived that Marquis of Hertford, who, under the transparent disguise of the Marquis of Steyne, has been immortalized by Thackeray, Hertford house realizes the dream of what it is possible to accomplish in the way of beauty when one has the treasure of Attalus to gratify the taste of a Lorenzo de Medici for all that is rich and rare.

Hertford House, indeed, has be transformed into a place of delight. One passes through room after room of stately grandeur, upon the walls of which, arranged so far as has been practicable, according to their schools, hang masterpieces of the great masters of the English, Dutch, French, Italian, and Spanish schools. Very few artists of supreme distinction lack representation—and worthy representation—in these superb galleries.

Nor is it only upon the walls that the recources of art have been lavished. In the centre of the galleries will be found case after case full of Sevres porcelain, only to be rivaled by the Queen's collection at Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, metal work in silver and gold, ivories and jewels, costly enamels of Limoges, French snuff boxes of gold and enamel, delicately set with diamonds and precious stones, rare examples of Italian majolica, vases of jasper and onyx, each the work of a famous craftsman. French furniture, absolutely unmatched in beauty, of the reigns of Louis Quatorze, Louis Quinze, and Louis Seize, priceless clocks, candelabra, bronzes, garnitures, and cabinets—these have their match hardly anywhere else in the world. Matchless, too, is the collection of armor formed by Sir Richard Wallace, occupying four entirely new galleries, and the sculptor's art is illustrated in a few choice examples by famous French masters of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

There are wonderful examples of cinquecento mirrors, a magnificent collection of Hispano-Moorish ware, and Italian majolica. The large circular Gubbio dish, "The Bath of Diana," signed by Maestro Giorgio, and dated 1525, is unique. Very unusual, too, is the great Urbino cistern, dated 1572, displayed on a table by itself. There are also splendid examples of Palissy ware, and of Limoges enamels, from the champleve enamels of the early thirteenth century to those, on a flat surface of copper, belonging to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—dishes and covers by Martial Courtois, Pierre Reymond, and Jehan Court medals, ivories and a very rare and curious collection of cires, that is, colored wax portraits and medallions of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

In the magnificent gallery which traverses the entire breadth of the building on the upper floor the fair English women of Reynolds and Gainsborough, Romney and Hoppner stand out in striking contrast to the sterner and more sombre portraits of Rembrandt, Velasquez and Van Dyck.

In the series of galleries set aside to show the French art of the eighteenth century, the daintiness, the delicacy and the grace of the French masters at that time, hitherto so imperfectly appreciated in England—Watteau, Lancret, Fragonard, Boucher, Nattier, Carle van Loo, Madame Vigee le Brun—are illustrated more convincingly here than in any private or public gallery in Europe, this section of the collection transcending in several important particulars the treasures of the Louvre itself. The Continental museums may envy London its possession of such masterpieces as "La Femme a l'Eventail" of Velazquez; the "Philippe le Roy" and "Madame le Roy" of Van Dyck; the "Laughing Cavalier" of Frans Hals; the series of paintings by Rembrandt; the "Rainbow" landscape of Reubens; the five landscapes of Hobbema; "The Horse Fair" of Wouverman; the eleven examples of Cuyp; and the other rare canvases of the Dutch and Flemish schools in their prime. Another special feature of the Wallace collection is the gallery devoted to the French and British masters of the nineteenth century. Prudhon can be studied in England for the first time, and the French Romantic school receives ample illustration. Many things which in this section might be considered a trifle demode and artistically less than first-rate are, nevertheless, of great interest as landmarks in the history of French art.

Merely a Postman.

One day in the middle of October, Postman Martin set out on his usual round. The weather was frightful. The rain had not ceased to fall for over a week, and in the road were sloughs and quagmires. The rivulets were transformed into torrents, and what foliage remained on the trees was so impregnated with water that they afforded no shelter. Wet to the bone, the postman walked with the impassibility of the old soldier who does not dispute his duty. He had distributed a part of his letters, but his round was far from being at an end when he passed an insignificant country inn which stood on the outskirts of a wood and served a double purpose to the peasants of the district—namely, a grocery store and wineshop.

"Hello! Stop a minute and give me some information which I require, and by that time this storm will be over."

Such was the invitation addressed to him by a man who, pipe in mouth, was standing at the door of the inn.

The rain was descending in torrents at that moment, a violent wind blowing it in the postman's face and driving him almost backward. Notwithstanding the weather the postman was a little ahead of his time, and the exigencies of the service did not go so far as to forbid him to accept a momentary shelter when offered under such circumstances. He entered the inn and walked toward the fire which crackled on the hearth.

The man who invited him to enter threw on some dry branches, which blazed up immediately, causing a thick steam to rise from Martin's soaked clothing.

The stranger interrogated him upon the hours of the departure of the mail and followed this by a crowd of questions concerning himself and his service.

"You don't know me, then?" said Martin.

"No, but I hear everyone esteems you here. They know your worth. I hope you won't refuse to drink with me, though I don't know you." And without waiting for a reply he called to the mistress of the inn:

"Bring two glasses of your best brandy."

A big woman came and served them and returned to her occupation.

"What a wretched business yours is, postman! I hope you haven't much farther to go, but I suppose as far as some one who is waiting for you impatiently there, and as I am going that way I should save you going on by taking your letters for you."

"Thank you, I'll deliver them myself."

"That's just like you, from what I hear, and, after all, you're right. It is your duty."

Still talking with a loquacity that the postman did not encourage, the stranger lifted the bag which the postman had placed by his side and appeared to examine it, as if trying its weight, turning it around in different ways.

"Leave my bag alone, please," said Martin, dryly. "You have mixed up all my letters."

The stranger humbly excused his awkwardness and added: "That can easily be remedied."

The postman emptied his bag before him and began to classify his letters. His interlocutor affected to stand discretely at a distance, but threw a furtive glance over his shoulder.

While the postman was so occupied he heard beside him a furious growling and the stranger said suddenly: "Stop! Our dogs are fighting!"

The postman rose and took his dog, whose present fury contrasted forcibly with his usual gentleness, by the collar. The animal's behavior made him more suspicious of the communicative stranger.

He was about to replace the letters in his bag when the unknown man, as if to see what the weather was, opened the door. Instantly a gust of wind burst impetuously into the room, filling it with thick smoke, and catching up the letters on the table scattered them over the room.

The postman uttered an exclamation of anger.

"Bah! That is nothing," said the other. "We will soon pick them up," and without taking any notice of Martin's refusal of his assistance he began to assist in recovering the letters.

When they were gathered, the postman closely examined them.

"Are there any missing?" said the other.

"It seems to me that there was another letter," replied the postman.

"Oh, you've made a mistake, or else you've left it at the office."

"Well, it is possible," said he, and added to himself, "It must be so."

However, he recommenced his search and looked under all the furniture, but finding nothing concluded that his recollection was at fault, for he had watched his companion's movements and it did not appear possible that he could have taken a letter.

Still he hastened to leave, regretting that he had entered the inn. The storm had greatly abated, and though the rain continued it soon ceased completely, and the sun illuminated the landscape before the postman arrived at the nearest village.

A woman, still young, with an attractive and sympathetic rather than remarkably beautiful face, stood at the door of her house waiting for him to pass.

"Ah, Martin," she said, "you have a letter for me."

"No, Mme. Andre, I have nothing."

"That is very strange. I am sure my husband must have written. You don't know how much this silence troubles me."

She became pale and appeared to hardly have the power to stand.

"You will receive a letter tomorrow," said the postman, reassuringly. "Its being a day late is easily explained."

"No; I cannot understand my husband's silence. You know he left two months ago for the town. He went about some business which would bring him a large sum of money. It concerned a little heritage which had fallen to him. But all that is arranged, and he was to return this evening. Tomorrow the neighboring farm is to be sold, and I know he had decided to purchase it. It is an opportunity which will not occur again, but I should a thousand times rather that he missed it than return without his letting me know when he would come."

"Why?" asked the postman, astonished.

"Because I know some one has some evil design against him, and at night one may easily receive an unlucky blow. You know there are two roads from the market town here. One is the longer, but safer. I am afraid he will return by the burned mill, because he has some one to see by that way."

The postman tried to calm her fears. She shook her head.

Then she continued: "It's not only because my husband will travel in a dangerous place with money that I am afraid and tremble, but rather because there is in the neighborhood a wretch who desires nothing so much as to put six feet of earth between us."

"This hatred is not new," she added. "When I was a young girl this man wished to marry me, but I refused him. He has never forgiven me or my husband. He is annoyed that we live comfortably. That is not all. A crime has recently been committed. I possess the proofs, and the guilty man knows it. That is a dangerous secret for a woman to hold with only children about her. Yesterday this man accosted me. I did not conceal my disdain and he saw that he was unmasked in my eyes. Then he insulted and threatened me. I was indiscreet enough to tell him that when my husband returned and he had a man before him he would be less arrogant. If you knew what a look he gave me, what an expression of hatred his features wore! I know he has often been seen at night wandering among the ruins of the burned mill. If my husband came that way! If this man suspected it, I tell you, Martin, he is lost."

"What is the name of this rascal?"

"Jean Bruno."

The postman remained silent. He remembered having heard the innkeeper call the man he had met by that name. He wondered, then, with affright, if the letter had not been stolen from him. But he felt sure that he had not remembered seeing it. He promised her that he would go to meet her husband on his arrival at the market town and warn him to be careful. Then he hastened to depart.

Unfortunately his round that day was exceptionally long, and the bad weather retarded him. He arrived a little later than usual at the office and immediately questioned the postmistress.

She answered that she was sure he had taken a letter addressed to Mme. Andre, and a colleague confirmed the declaration.

This was a thunderbolt for him. His trouble increased as he recollected that many times some one had called at the moment when the mails were received and opened to ask if there was anything for Mme. Andre.

He flew rather than ran to the coach office, where he was informed that George Andre had arrived and had set off on foot for his home.

The postman was much agitated at this news. The prospect of a catastrophe for which he was responsible rose before him. He saw George Andre, with joy in his heart, meeting with death on the threshold of his home and misfortune falling upon the wodow and orphans.

Without hesitation, or even giving himself time to enter his own house, he set out again. Those who saw him pass wondered what grave business caused him, fatigued as he was, to go back so hastily by the route he had just come.

When he had covered a quarter of the distance to George Andre's house, he questioned some people to know if they had seen the traveler. He was told that George Andre had passed some time before. Joy at his return gave wings to the one, as to the other did the thought of preventing evil crossing his path.

There was no doubt that Andre had taken the road which would conduct him to the burned mill. By taking a difficult footpath, however, the postman calculated that he might still arrive at the mill first. He still more hastened his steps and reached the fatal spot when the evening was somewhat advanced.

The place was propitious for an ambuscade. A kind of cutting had been opened between some rocks, and small, bushy trees growing on each side formed a miniature avenue. The clouds were passing quickly and every now and then covered the moon. In the middle of the culvert he heard footsteps. It was doubtless George Andre a few yards ahead of him. The postman hastened to meet him, when a shot rang out, and he fell, struck in the breast.

The assassin immediately came out of an adjacent thicket, but as he approached his victim to despatch and rob him he found himself in the presence of a new arrival, and his disappointment found vent in an awful curse as he recognized George Andre.

The blade of a knife glittered in the assassin's hand, but before he could use it he was felled to the ground by a vigorous blow from the newcomer.

At the same moment a woman, wild with terror, threw herself upon the postman's body, crying:

"Unhappy woman that I am. I saw it all! He has killed him!"

It was Mme. Andre, who arrived there just as the postman fell.

"Jane," said her husband, "I am not hurt."

They stooped over the body, and by a ray of moonlight which just then appeared they recognized the postman's face.

The husband and wife carried him to their house, where he lived twenty-four hours.

Before he died the couple learned the story of his devotion to duty and noble heroism.—London Million.

MARRIAGE AMONG THE MIAMIS

The Ways of the Indian Warrior in Winning a Squaw.

(From the Indianapolis Press.)

There was no formal marriage ceremony among the Miamis. The parents of both parties generally made the match, frequently without the consent or even the knowledge of the parties to the marriage. Often when the young Indian had fixed his attention on a young squaw he would make his desires known to his mother, or to a particular friend in whose care he would place the presents intended for the parents of the bride, usually a fine blanket, or silver ornaments, or, perhaps, a sack of corn; the value of the presents were governed by the standing or wealth of the bridegroom. If the presents were accepted, it was understood that the contract was completed. The young man would then lead his chosen companion to his wigwam. If, in the warm season, it was customary for them to make a wedding tour of several days. Wherever night overtook them, there they pitched their wigwam, spending the day in hunting and fishing. When the tour was ended they returned with the product of the hunt. These mutual engagements were very seldom broken, although the marriage was not based upon affection, was exclusively a matter of convenience or physical necessity. The Miamis had specific causes for divorce, the same as the whites. These were unfaithfulness and intolerable laziness, ill-temper or crossness on the part of the wife.

The difference existing between the marriage contract of the whites and Indians is illustrated by the following anecdote, related by the Missionary Hecewelder. "One day, in the year 1770, an old Indian, who had spent much time among the whites, said to me, 'Indian has easier way to get a good wife than white man. For,' said he, in his broken English, 'white man court-court may be one year, may be two year before he marry. Well, maybe then get very good wife; but maybe not; may be very cross. Well, now, suppose cross, scold so soon as get awake in morning, scold all day, scold until sleep—all one; he must keep him. [The pronouns in the Indian language have no feminine gender.] White people have law forbidding to throw away wife if ever so cross; must keep him always. Well, how does Indian do? Indian, when he see industrious squaw which he likes, he go to him, place his two forefingers close aside each other, make two look like one, look squaw in the face—see him smile—which is all one he say 'yes,' so he take him home—no danger he be cross; no, no. Squaw know too well what Indian do if he cross; throw him away and take another. Squaw love to eat meat; no husband no meat. Squaw do everything to please husband; he do the same to please squaw; live happy.'"

Polygamy or plurality of wives prevailed to a considerable extent among the Miamis—in fact, among most of the tribes of this continent. It was considered lawful for any man to marry as many wives as he could provide for—not more. They often selected sisters, believing that they would be more likely to live together in peace, and that the children of the one would be loved and cared for by the other more than if the wives were not so closely related. In the Indian household there was no such thing known as domestic jars or family quarrels.

The squaws were the toilers; the performed nearly all the labor except the hunting; they cultivated the soil that brought forth the vegetation that went to nourish them, and gathered and saved the crops, jerked and dried the meats, prepared the Indian meal, dried the winter's fruit, gathered the wood for the fires and cooked the meals, nursing and caring for the children, assisted by young boys not yet old enough to hunt. After the boys arrived at the hunting age they are no longer considered as squaws, and are put to hunting. They soon become competent hunters, and when at home, like the older hunters, lie lazily about and are of no account for anything else, never assisting in domestic duties, which they consider a calling solely for the women, and dishonorable to men.

When removing from one point to another, or retiring to their hunting grounds for the winter, the squaws' duty was to carry the luggage—packing it on their backs. When the red man went in pursuit of game, it was the custom of the faithful squaw to follow and carry upon her shoulders the fruits of the chase, and she attended the traps set for game.

ACCUSING SPIRITS

"The Lord hath delivered yew into my hands!" Dick looked at the speaker, Lieutenant Curwen, of the revenue, seated on the keg in triumph; he looked at the landlord of the Green Dragon, a prisoner, like himself; at the two revenue men who guarded the door, and he thought dolefully that there was some truth in the lieutenant's remark. All night Dick had been out in the Betsy Jane, and though, of course, being a mere visitor to the little seaside inn, he had only gone for the sake of the sail and the excitement, it was impossible to deny that when the lugger dropped anchor in the black pool some time before dawn fifteen kegs had been landed, and he had helped land them. For all Dick cared—or knew—they might have contained water. Fourteen went into the country in the charge of silent men who seemed to know their road even by that half light. One, notwithstanding the remonstrance of the Betsy Jane's skipper, who declared it a dangerous proceeding, had been placed on a barrow and wheeled up to the Green Dragon by Dick and Mr. Prendergast, landlord of the same. Prendergast was positive that the gaugers had no inkling of the landing; Dick was content to regard the cask as a cask—which might contain water. The consequence was that, no sooner had they installed the keg in this attic than a rap at the door came, followed by the entry of Lieutenant Curwen and a dozen revenue men. Dick and the landlord were at once arrested. That was the miserable fact. True, Prendergast before he lapsed into sulky silence had conveyed to Dick that the other fourteen kegs, after which the lieutenant had sent ten of his men, were safe from pursuit. But there was little consolation in that. The fact remained that here was the incriminating keg, and the lieutenant seated upon it in fanatical triumph.

"The Lord hath delivered yew into my hands," he repeated.

"Think so?" said Dick, dubiously.

"Tew of my men saw yew landing kegs from the lugger; they saw yew wheel this one in a barrow up to th' inn——"

"It's uncommonly hard work wheeling a barrow," said Dick.

"'Twill not assist yew to make a mockery of your crime."

"True, my dear sir; quite true," said Dick, feigning a levity he did not feel. "But you see my contention is that—so far as I'm aware—there is no brandy in that keg."

The lieutenant did not deign to reply, but drummed his heels on the cask, which gave back a gurgling, liquorish sound.

"Soda water, perhaps," Dick suggested, pleasantly.

A knock was heard at the door and the lieutenant said, "Coom in," pompously. Entered Sal Preendergast, with a tear-stained face.

"'Tis a letter," she said diffidently, "for Mr. Shenston."

"May the captive of your spear receive communications?" Dick asked, affably.

"From whom does the letter come?" demanded the lieutenant.

"From Miss Judy, sur," said Sal, and his brows contracted angrily. "She was passen and seed me cryen——"

"Thou shalt not mourn for the wicked," said the lieutenant.

"Not ef ma father's taken by the gaugers an' charged o' runnen kags!" Sal flashed out. "Miss Judy dew not think so, and when I talled her she said it was a sheame——"

"Peace, girl," said the lieutenant.

"What more did she say?" Dick asked eagerly.

"Nothen of importance," said Sal.

The lieutenant had taken possession of the note and was examining the superscription. If he had opened it, as he seemed half inclined to do, Dick's crime would have extended to assault and battery. But he handed it over, saying grimly:

"It's going beyond my dewties—but if I know Squire, it'll be the last you get."

"You certainly go beyond your duties," said Dick, opening it tenderly. Evidently Miss Judy had been distrustful of the duteous lieutenant, for the note was written in French. Translated, it ran:

"Keep the lieutenant in conversation for twenty minutes from now. Remember that—so far as you kow—there is no brandy in the cask. At the end of that time there will be none.—J."

"Dear girl," said Dick to himself. "But what on earth she means I cannot make out. If she were to offer to converse with Curwen or drug him it would be a different matter."

Sal, watching his face, asked if there were any answer.

"Is Miss Judy still here?" asked Dick, unwarily, so that the lieutenant looked suspiciously toward Sal. But she behaved with admirable discretion.

"For what should Miss Judy be here!" she said, with an air of surprise. "I meant, ef the was an answer, I could take——"

"Ah, if you would be so good as to go after her," said Dick. "Thank her for me and say 'certainly.'"

Sal slid from the room, leaving Dick to maintain his parley. As she entered the room directly beneath she was greeted a little anxiously with the question, "Well, did you mark exactly where it stands?"

"Ise, Miss Judy," said Sal. "Just here to the left." She pushed the table under the spot, and Miss Judy mounted thereupon. "Quick, Sal, the men may be back any moment! Lock the front door, and then come and hold the can. I'll do this——"

The room was the bar parlor, with two doors to it—one for the front and one for the back. For the rest it was also usual enough, and thin boarding only separated it from the room above. Through the boarding, in silence, with the utmost care, Miss Judy drove a gimlet. In a short time a spurt of brandy followed, and Sal received it in a can.

"How I shall smell of brandy!" said Miss Judy, as it trickled over her fingers.

"I doan't expect Mr. Shenston will mind," said Sal, gleefully.

Miss Judy became very severe. "Remember, Sal, that this is a most disgraceful affair."

"I doan't think Mr. Shenston mant to do wrong," said Sal.

"And I should not have supposed your father would have been guilty of it. If he is ever caught again——"

"He willn't be such a fule."

Miss Judy concealed a smile. "Another pail!" she said. "And empty that into the duckpond."

Sal hastened off with her burden, and another pail received the brandy.

"Really Dick," murmured Miss Judy, apostrophizing the boarding in a whisper, "it was most naughty of you."

Meanwhile Dick was showing his repentance by faithfully engaging the lieutenant in conversation. It was rather a difficult thing to do, and annoying exceedingly to see him sitting there on the cask. Dick, consulting his watch, found that eighteen minutes had passed, and he made another effort, for Curwen was getting restless.

"You see," he urged, "in any case there is a nice point of law involved. If I am an ignorant accessory there cannot——"

"Squire dew not see nice points of law," retorted Curwen. "There's morals and there's sins; there's sheep and there's goats——"

"And asses," Dick suggested.

"There's keeping straight and there's running contraband."

"And my contention is," repeated Dick, wearily, "that, so far as I know, that is not brandy in that keg."

The lieutenant's retort was interrupted by the tramp of his returning men. They showed empty hands, and said that they had had no luck. But the lieutenant was too contented to be greatly put out by this.

"Never mind," he said, "there's enough here. Get the barrow ready and we'll go up to Squire's."

And he turned to the landlord rancorously. "Prendergast, yew have made off with the rest o' your sinful contraband, but yew cannot escape when yew have broken the law."

"Stow ut!" said Prendergast, sulkily. "Yew come here to ma house an' call me rascal. Yew've got no prewf. I ask yew where's yew're prewf?"

"Here," said the lieutenant. And again he kicked his heels on the keg. It gave out a hollow sound. He leapt off it as if he had been suddenly stung. A faint glimmer of the truth dawned upon Dick.

"Remember," he said, provokingly, "my contention has been that there is no brandy in the cask."

The lieutenant turned it over on its side without answering. It was empty, and, though the floor beneath was damp, the holes had been stopped up.

"There was brandy in it," he said, rounding on Dick.

"The—soda water seems to have evaporated," said Dick, innocently. Some of the revenue men began to snigger.

"Search the place!" said Curwen, gnashing his teeth. One of the men returned persistently and announced a strong smell of brandy in the yard, particularly in the duck pond.

"It would hardly do to show the Squire water from the duckpond as contraband spirits," said Dick.

"There's sheep and there's goats," said the lieutenant, hardly able to contain his wrath, so that Dick came very near pitying him and only murmured "and asses," this time under his breath. The lieutenant ordered his men off and followed them. Dick, without stopping to explain matters to the bewildered Prendergast, hastened down. "Sal," he called, "where is Miss Judy?"

"Wasn't it clever of her?" said Sal, admiringly. "But I'm going to stop father runnen kegs. It's very bad, she says, and not safe."

"But where is Miss Judy?"

"Oh, she went down th' road," said Sal. "I expect you might find her under the big alm."—The King.

BEER GARDENS IN JAPAN.

Mild Beverages Not Likely to Lead to Intemperance.

(From the San Francisco Post.)

The old romantic glories that cling to the tea gardens of Japan are engaged in a serious struggle for popular favor with the new-fangled "beer groves" that are springing up by dozens and invading the very localities where tea has reigned supreme for centuries.

Two miles out of the city of Kobe, along a smooth road that forms probably the most beautiful jinricksha run in Japan, you reach one of these beer groves, the first that was established in the country. The surrounding district consists of a picturesque succession of native villas and gardens, and has long been a favorite visiting place for tourists on account of its possession of a picturesque waterfall and two of the largest teahouses in that part of Japan.

Immediately across the road from the entrance to one of these teahouses and 100 yards from the waterfall is the "home of the foaming glass," as they call it. A signboard over a gate skilifully made of gnarled trunks of trees hears the following inscription:

"To English and Generally Foreign: The beer of this establishment is made with most purest spring waters that flow. It will be satisfied to the tastes in all respect, and our proprietors guarantee politeness to each and every one. Inside within we present samples of this purest truth and can be tested at all times."

The interior, being Japanese, was, of course, spotlessly clean and was beautiful with dozens of artistic little touches so characteristic of everything that these quaint people do. Take an old fashioned German beer garden, strip it of everything but the open air idea and its little tables, and then fill up the whole space with graceful arbors covered with clematis, paths of neat matting running in all directions over the ground, cunning colored lanterns hanging from every trellis corner and in place of bulky, white bosomed waiters, with heavy tread and wilted collars, imagine black-eyed, demure little women clad in the brightest colored komonos ever printed in the Yamatara factories, and you have some idea of a Japanese beer garden.

Back of a lovely cluster of idagua creepers that covered the further end of the trellis, where the waitresses of the resort disappeared every few moments to fill their orders, we could see a small shed almost hidden in its turn with great bunches of wisteria. Here they kept the barrels, old Amontillado sherry casks doing new duty far away from their native Europe. In little openings through the trellis you could catch glimpses of the foothills in the background, looking so close in the wonderfully clear air that they seemed to be only a few miles from the tables.

"What will you have—large or small glasses? No difference in the price."

One of the partners of the establishment asked us this, while the others stood smiling just behind him. Half of the fun in visiting a strange land is lost if you don't "take a chance" once in a while. We ordered the largest. When they came, served in a lacquered tray by one of the barmaids, or rather gardenmaids, of this etherealized saloon, we found that they were not glasses at all, but large blue and white bowls on the breakfast mush order, but with handles on both sides. And the beer itself proved rather a surprise too. It looked like the palest kind of lager and the taste reminded one dimly—very dimly—of extremely flat ale.

Truly, these enterprising proprietors might advertise: "Not a headache in a barrel." Strength it had none, and what it lacked in that essential is made up in sugar and water. The Japanese are not an intemperate people, but if any of them ever get a desire to stray from the straight path they must have an interesting time trying to accomplish their aim by patronizing home industry.

A bumblebee couldn't work up a decent stupor on a hogshead of it.

A Pen Picture of Mr. Bryan.

(From the Chicago Record.)

Those who have had an opportunity to observe Colonel Bryan under various conditions agree that there have been notable changes in his character and manners and in his habits of thought since he came so prominently before the public in 1896 as a candidate for the Presidency. In appearance he has aged considerably during the last four years. His face is much stronger and fuller than it was four years ago. He has gained considerable flesh, notwithstanding his arduous work upon the stump and platform, and weigh between thirty and forty pounds more than in 1896, tipping the scales at an easy 200. That Mr. Bryan leads an abstemious life and eats frugal fare is easily evident from his clear eyes and complexion. He is a man of small appetite and simple tastes, neither a glutton nor a wine bibber, although not a teetotaller either in theory or practice. He never uses wines or beer on his table, although he sometimes drinks both when offered him at the tables of others.

Bryan's face, as I have said, is stronger, the lines around his mouth are firmer, and show more repose of manner than formerly. He has lost that restless enquiring expression that used to lie about his eyes, and he evidently has more strength and confidence, more deliberation and determination, and less energy. His nervous impetuousness has been subdued. He is governed more by reason and less by impulse. Experience has taught him where he is weak, and he has mended himself. He has learned his strength, and that has given him confidence.

While his emotions are under better control than they used to be, nothing could lessen or suppress that cordial sympathy which finds expression in a winsome smile and is a great vote winner. It is just as much a part of the man as the musical tones of his voice, and when he extends his hand to friend or stranger the smile goes with it. Sometimes, however, it is a little constrained. Its owner is an amiable man. His spirit is not vindictive or revengeful. He is quick to forgive, but not always to forget; and when he meets a man from whom he has suffered injury or injustice the smile appears unconsciously, but it has an uncertain or reluctant tinge, like a compliment that has been written and crossed out. He is not so sensitive as he used to be, but very sensitive still; but perhaps it may be that he has learned to conceal it.